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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON CHANGE OF PRESIDENTS

FOLLOWING IS APPROVED PRESS GUIDANCE FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION AND POSSIBLE USE. BEGIN QUOTE:

Q. MR. APARICIO MENDEZ WAS SWORN IN AS PRESIDENT OF URUGUAY, SEPTEMBER 1. WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND FOR THIS CHANGE IN PRESIDENTS?

A. MR. MENDEZ WAS SWORN IN SEPTEMBER 1 FOR A FIVE YEAR TERM. HE REPLACES MR. ABERTO DEMICHELI WHO WAS APPOINTED INTERIM PRESIDENT IN JUNE 1976 WHEN PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, WHO WAS ELECTED IN 1971 FOR A TERM ENDING MARCH 1977, WAS REMOVED FROM OFFICE.

Q. WHAT IS MR. MENDEZ'S BACKGROUND?

A. MR. MENDEZ IS 72 YEARS OLD. HE IS A GRADUATE OF THE
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LAW SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE REPUBLIC IN URUGUAY.

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HE HAS BEEN AT VARIOUS TIMES A TEACHER, AN ADMINISTRATOR, A LEGAL ADVISOR, A JUDGE AND A MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (61-64) IN THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT. SINCE DECEMBER 1973 MR. MENDEZ HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE (A

BODY APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT TO REPLACE THE URUGUAYAN CONGRESS WHICH WAS SUSPENDED IN 1973). IN 1974 HE WAS NAMED FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL. HE BECAME PRESIDENT OF THAT BODY IN JUNE 1976. MR. MENDEZ ALSO BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NATION IN JULY 1976 AND SERVED IN THAT CAPACITY UNTIL HE WAS INAUGURATED PRESIDENT OF URUGUAY.

Q. HAS THE USGRECOGNIZED THE MENDEZ GOVERNMENT?

A. IN CASES WHERE THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT INTERRUPTION OF CONTINUITY, OUR PRACTICE IS THAT NO QUESTION OF RECOGNITION ARISES. THE US CONTINUES NORMAL RELATIONS WITH URUGUAY.

Q. DO WE HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT THE EXTRA-CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF PRESIDENTS IN URUGUAY?

A. THE USG FAVORS DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT AND ATTEMPTS TO ENCOURAGE THEM WITHIN THE LIMITS OF WHAT IS FEASIBLE. IN PRACTICE, OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES IS VERY LIMITED.
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